

Federal Funding Opportunity (MODIFIED)

Overview Information

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division.

Funding Opportunity Title: Clean Air Act 103 STAG Funds to Support U.S./Mexico Border Activities

Announcement Type: Modification of the Initial Announcement which was made available on October 29, 2003. The modification is to remove all reference to \$400,000 of Environmental Program Management (EPM) funding which will no longer be included in this funding opportunity. All dates and deadlines remain the unchanged.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 66.034 Surveys, Studies, Investigations, Demonstrations and Special Purpose Activities relating to the Clean Air Act.

Dates: January 16, 2004 deadline for all proposals (including final applications and workplans) to be submitted.

February 29, 2004 selection of approved proposals by EPA

April 1, 2004 target grant award date. (Award date depends on the EPA budget progress and money being made available to the Region.)

All dates listed are by midnight, Central Standard time.

Overview: *(On cover or inside cover)* This document is to announce an open competition of Clean Air Act (CAA) 103 funds to support air quality management along the US/Mexico border. This funding opportunity will make available approximately \$2,300,000 in 2003/2004 State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) funds. EPA anticipates that between five and fifteen awards will be made in the range of \$25,000 to \$600,000 each. The awarding instrument will be through a cooperative agreement. In order to be eligible to apply for the STAG funds, an applicant must be a state or local government entity. There is no cost share or matching requirements for these funds. EPA reserves the right to reject all applicants and make no awards from this competition. Application packages can be downloaded from the following web address:

http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html

Full Text

Funding Opportunity

Urban populations along the border have increased significantly over the past 20 years, due in part to the maquiladora program, begun in 1965, which provided economic incentives to foreign (mostly U.S.-owned) assembly plants located in the border region. The rate of industrial development increased further after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), with about 1,700 plants operating in Mexico in 1990. by 2001, that figure had more than doubled to nearly 3,800 maquiladora plants, 2,700 of which were in the border states. In Mexico, the border region has a low unemployment rate and high wages compared to other regions of the country.

While economic growth has contributed to employment, the region's infrastructure has not kept pace. As a result, natural resources are strained and the environment and public health are adversely affected on both sides of the border.

For the past 18 years, the U.S. and Mexico have collaborated to help safeguard the health of border residents protecting and improving border air quality. The two governments, in partnership with border tribal, state, and local governments, have worked to increase the knowledge about pollution sources and their impacts on both sides of the border, establish monitoring networks in several key areas, conduct emissions inventories, and build local capacity through training. Through these efforts, the two countries have established a foundation for binational air quality planning and management programs. The overall program goals are to: determine ambient concentrations from pollutant emissions; assess contributing emission sources and their relative impacts; and develop and implement cost effective control strategies.

Recognizing that pilot projects could spur the development of innovative and progressive air quality management approaches, EPA is announcing the availability of Federal funding to support innovative projects which address air quality issues along the U.S. Mexico border.

The projects to be funded with this competition will be from State and Tribal Assistance Grants STAG 103 funds, which are specifically for use to conduct investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, studies and training in support of the U.S./Mexico Border initiative. The Office of Air and Radiation sets aside air U.S./Mexico Border funds on an annual basis, which are provided to Region 6 to fund activities on or near the border of the U.S. and Mexico. These activities are typically conducted by State and Local governmental agencies in Texas and New Mexico, which according to the Guidance for Funding Air and Radiation Activities using the STAG Appropriation, on November 12, 1999, STAG Border fund recipients may only be State and Local Governments.

The type of projects EPA hopes to fund from this competition include: enhancing energy efficiency in border communities, installing renewable energy projects in border communities, working with the State of Texas and/or New Mexico as partners with EPA to produce a video (bilingual) that highlights practical methods of energy efficiency and renewable energy for border area city officials, staff, and residents; enhancing baseline air quality monitoring in Ciudad Juarez to include upgrading and replacing existing air monitoring; providing assistance to the City of Ciudad Juarez, and the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) to operate, quality assure, and report data to EPA; working with SEMARNAT, state and local governments, and NGOs to identify additional monitoring needs in border zone of Mexico; operating quality-assuring and reporting data to EPA from the existing border air and meteorological monitoring network in Texas operated by TCEQ; operating quality-assuring, and reporting data to EPA from the existing border air and meteorological monitoring network in New Mexico operated by NMED; assessing the PM 2.5 impacts on all of Texas and New Mexico, with special emphasis on the Texas border area, from fires in Mexico and Central America; providing administrative and technical support to the Paso del Norte Joint Advisory Committee for Air Quality Improvement; Managing the U.S./Mexico border air quality program for the State of New Mexico and for the State of Texas; monitoring, assessing, and analyzing the

non-fire effects of international pollution transport on Texas air quality and haze episodes, including impacts on Texas class I areas.

Award Information

The total amount to be funded through this announcement will be approximately \$2,300,000 in STAG funds. EPA anticipates that there will be between five to fifteen awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$600,000 each. Experience in previous years with border grants will be viewed as beneficial. EPA anticipates that the start dates for these projects would be approximately June 1, 2004, and the period of performance would not exceed 18 months.

These awards will be funded through the cooperative agreement process and will include substantial involvement by EPA. Substantial involvement will include EPA approval of specific phases of the project before the recipient proceeds to the next phase; EPA will approve key personnel; EPA will assist in some of the project activities; EPA will approve the workplan prior to the award agreement; EPA will address deficiencies in performance; EPA will review project results after completion of the work; EPA will ensure recipient compliance with statutes, regulations, policies and all requirements in the agreement, and review progress reports.

Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

This announcement will be funded with Clean Air Act (CAA) 103 STAG funds that may be used to conduct investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, studies and training in support of the US/Mexico border initiative. Qualified recipients of the competition funding must be U.S. state and local government agencies engaged in conducting investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, studies and training in support of the U.S./Mexico border initiative.

If an applicant fails to meet eligibility criteria by the time of an application deadline, the applicant will be returned without review.

Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no cost share or matching requirements for these projects.

Other Eligibility Requirements

Only one application per submitting entity, will be considered. However, an application may involve more than one project.

Application and Submission Information

Step 1 - Submit a proposed workplan not to exceed five pages, postmarked by 12 midnight on January 16, 2004, Central Standard Time (CST). The information should provide EPA with a profile of the applicant, the purpose of your project, a brief explanation of how you plan to accomplish your project, and an estimate of the time and money needed to complete your project

(see format below). During the review of the proposals, EPA may request clarification on submitted information. Proposals that are inconsistent with program goals or that contain ineligible costs and activities will be screened out of the review process, but may be referred to other EPA funding programs if appropriate. An application package can be obtained at the following web address: http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html, or contact Jeri Englerth at 214-665-7402.

Application Format

- Applications should be limited to no more than five pages (not including Standard Form SF-424, and SF-424A). Page size should be 8½ by 11" with font size of 12 points or larger. The following format should be used for all applications submitted:
- Completed Standard Form SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Completed Standard Form SF 424A, Budget Information-Section B (See allowable costs)
- Detailed itemization of the amounts budgeted by Individual Object Class Categories (See Allowable costs).
- Brief narrative of Project Purpose and Environmental Results to be Achieved by Project
- Brief description of the applicant organization, experience related to the areas of interest and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to implement the proposed project.
- Brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project; including the number of workers and staff qualifications (no resumes required).
- Milestone Chart, including expected accomplishments, projected due dates (project will be anticipated to last no longer than 18 months).
- Description of how the proposed project meets the Ranking Criteria specified in this announcement.
- How will project results be measured and how will that relate to environmental improvements.
- Workplan not to exceed 5 pages.
- Letters of commitment from project partners, if applicable.

Proposals must be post-marked by 12 midnight (CST) on January 16, 2004 (NO fax submissions) to:

Cynthia Brown
Region 6 U.S./Mexico Border Initiative Proposals
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200 (6PD-S)
Dallas, TX 75202

Step 2

EPA Notifies Selectees: After the proposals are selected by EPA, we will notify selectees within 30 days of the selection date of February 29, 2004.

Border Air Program Priorities

Note: It is EPA's discretion which of the following project types will ultimately receive funding. It is the intent of EPA Region 6 that these funds will be used for projects along the U.S./Mexico border in Region 6. That will include the border region of Texas and New Mexico.

1. Enhancing energy efficiency in border communities with focus on municipalities and independent school districts, including documentation and quantification of kilowatt-hours and air pollutant emissions reduced
2. Installing renewable energy projects in border communities, including documentation and quantification of kilowatt hours and air pollutant emissions reduced
3. Enhancing baseline air quality monitoring in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico to include upgrading and replacement of existing air monitoring and meteorological devices and infrastructure provided under loan by EPA
4. Providing assistance to the City of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and SEMARNAT to operate, quality-assure, and report data to EPA from the air and meteorological monitoring network provided under loan by EPA
5. Working with SEMARNAT, Mexico state and local governments, and NGOs to identify additional monitoring needs in the border zone of Mexico which directly may impact U.S. air quality
6. Operating, quality-assuring, and reporting data to EPA from the existing border air and meteorological monitoring network in Texas operated by TCEQ via U.S.-Mexico border grants as of September 1, 2003
7. Operating, quality-assuring, and reporting data to EPA from the existing border air and meteorological monitoring network in New Mexico operated by NMED via U.S.-Mexico border grants as of September 1, 2003
8. Assessing the PM-2.5 and haze impacts on all of Texas, with special emphasis on the Texas border area, from fires in Mexico and Central America
9. Providing administrative and technical support to the Paso del Norte Joint Advisory Committee for Air Quality Improvement, to include translation at meetings, advertisement of meetings, assistance in technical planning, air monitoring and analysis and emissions inventory assistance, arrangement of, and participation in, other binational meetings

10. Managing the U.S.-Mexico border air quality program for the State of New Mexico
11. Managing the U.S.-Mexico border air quality program for the State of Texas
12. Monitoring, assessing, and analyzing the non-fire effects of international pollution transport on Texas air quality and haze episodes, including impacts on Texas class I areas
13. Producing a series of computer-generated animations highlighting hourly, modeled sulfur concentrations in North America from the Big Bend Regional Aerosol and Visibility Observational (BRAVO) Study for each modeled day in the July through October 1999 study period.
14. Assessing infrastructure impacts (road paving, natural gas access, etc.) on particulate matter pollution in the Paso del Norte air basin, and proposing/developing solutions.
15. Assessing and developing mobile source air pollution reduction strategies in border communities (e.g. strengthened vehicle inspection and maintenance programs, programs to retrofit/replace diesel engines and private cleaner fuels).
16. Assist in the completion of the Mexico National Emissions Inventory project.

Submission Dates and Times

January 16, 2004 deadline for all proposals to be submitted. Must be postmarked by midnight CST on January 16, 2004.

February 29, 2004 deadline for all proposals to be reviewed and selections made by EPA.

April 1, 2004 Target date for money to be made available to grantee, based upon the receipt of funds by the EPA Regional Office.

Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered for funding.

Intergovernmental Review (Required)

This funding opportunity is subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, You may contact the State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State's process under EO 12372. The names and addresses of the SPOC are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

Funding Restrictions

Ineligible costs are outlined in 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31, including construction and in OMB Circulars A-21 (Educational Institutions), A-87 (Governments), and A-122 (Non-profit Organizations).

Other Submission Requirements

Submissions of grant proposals can be done either electronically or in hard copy. Applicants are not required to submit in more than one format. All deadlines are midnight Central Standard Time and apply to all types of submissions. Items mailed through the postal service should be post marked by Midnight on the due date. All applications, if submitted by postal mail, should be mailed to Cynthia Brown/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 6PD-S/ 1445 Ross Ave. Suite 1200/Dallas, TX 75202. Electronic submissions should be made to:

Brown.cynthia@epa.gov.

Ranking Criteria for FY 2004 U.S.-Mexico Border Grants and Contracts Proposals Proposal Review and Ranking Process

Projects will be evaluated and funding recommendation made for the highest ranked projects by EPA using the following criteria (100 points total):

1. Proposal Concept – Proposal demonstrates high potential for success by clearly stating overall project goals that are valuable in analyzing or reducing air pollution in the U.S.-Mexico border area and by citing other similar projects that have successfully accomplished the goals of the proposed project. (15 points)
2. Proposal Methodology – Proposal clearly demonstrates a logical and meritorious method of conducting the work of the proposed project, the partners that will be used, and specific responsibilities of each entity participating in the proposed project. (20 points)
3. Proposal Technical Sufficiency – Proposal includes a technically meritorious workplan with accomplishment dates that will translate into successful achievement of the goals, and documentation of such achievement, for the proposed project. (30 points)
4. Proposal Cost-effectiveness – Proposal includes a cost-effective budget to achieve project goals. (15 points)
5. Experience – Proposal includes convincing information that the proposer has been successful in performing the type of projects proposed. Also, the proposal should demonstrate that the proposer either has successful experience or the high potential for establishing such experience, in working with State and Local Governmental agencies, as well as NGOs, along the U.S.-Mexico border specifically related to the proposed project. For projects directly involving Mexico as a partner, proposer has a demonstrated, effective, and successful track record in working with the federal and state governments of Mexico sufficient to accomplish the goals of the proposed project. (20 points)

Maximum score: 100 points

Please be sure your application addresses the following:

Does the proposal present a clear description of priority environmental problems or issues which the project will address?

Are the goals and tasks clear and concise?

Are the tasks, budget, and time lines realistic?

Does the applicant demonstrate that the proposed project can commence within 3-6 months?

Does the proposal include a well-conceived strategy to achieve those goals and objectives?

Does the project take a creative, innovative approach and/or implement successful models from other areas?

Does the project's scope and budget make effective and judicious use of the requested federal grant funds? Does it leverage other public or private resources, including in-kind contributions?

Does the project contain clear measures of success?

Will the project lead to measurable environmental improvements?

Review and Selection Process

The review and selection of the proposals will be done by a panel of EPA border and grant experts.

The final selection of projects will be made by the Director of the Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division.

Any disputes will be resolved in accordance with 40 CFR Part 31, subpart F.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and to not make any awards.

Award Notification

After the deadline for application has passed, EPA will acknowledge receipt of application by postal mail. Once applications have been reviewed, evaluated and ranked successful, and the final selections have been made, applicants will be notified within 30 days. The notification will be electronically or via postal service depending on how the application was submitted to EPA. Successful applicants will be required to complete additional application documents, including but not limited to; EPA Form SF-424B (Assurances Non-Construction Programs).

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

An applicant whose application is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10). In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR 32.

Confidentiality

Applicants must clearly mark information they consider confidential and EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency Regulations at 40 CFR. Part 2, Subpart B.

Reporting Requirements

Quarterly project status reports, a final project report, and a final Financial Status Report will be required. Quarterly reports should describe project activities and provide EPA with information about project development. The Financial Status Report must accurately account for all federal funds expended and identify appropriate use of federal funds.

Agency Contacts

Technical: Jim Yarbrough 214-665-7232, yarbrough.james@epa.gov

Administrative: Cynthia Brown 214-665-7480, brown.cynthia@epa.gov